

Appendix D: Cumulative Projects

Introduction

The Council on Environmental Quality's regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act defines cumulative effects as:

“the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non- federal) or person undertakes such actions” (40 CFR § 1508.7).

Following is a list of projects that may have potential cumulative impact when considered along with the South Fork Merced River Bridge Replacement Project alternatives. The purpose of the cumulative impact analysis is to determine (1) whether the resources, ecosystems and human communities have already been affected by past or present activities, and (2) whether other agencies or the public have plans that may affect resources in the future. The cumulative project list includes major plans and projects involving the South Fork Merced River corridor, and one transportation- related project in Yosemite Valley.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan

Description: In 1999 and 2000, the National Park Service developed a comprehensive management plan for the sections of the Merced Wild and Scenic River that it administers. The purpose of the *Merced Wild and Scenic River Comprehensive Management Plan* (Merced River Plan) is to protect and enhance the Outstandingly Remarkable Values and free- flowing condition of the river for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

The Merced River Plan applies seven management elements to prescribe desired future conditions, typical visitor activities and experiences, and park facilities and management activities allowed in the river corridor. The seven management elements include boundaries, classifications, Outstandingly Remarkable Values, a Wild and Scenic Rivers Act Section 7 determination process, River Protection Overlay, management zoning, and a Visitor Experience and Resource Protection framework. The Merced River Plan applies to any project that is within the Wild and Scenic River boundary, or would affect the Outstandingly Remarkable Values or free- flowing condition of the river.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **South Entrance/Mariposa Grove Site Planning**

Description: The National Park Service is considering alternatives for restoring giant sequoia habitat in the Lower Mariposa Grove of Giant Sequoias in Yosemite National Park by relocating the existing parking area to the vicinity of the South Entrance. It is expected that water drainage improvements will be made to the Mariposa Grove Road and that the existing water supply line would then be relocated into the road corridor. At South Entrance, the roadway would have minor realignments and the road would be repaved to address roadway safety problems. (Minor road realignment would require the relocation of the park entrance stations.) The visitor facilities located at the South Entrance area (such as visitor orientation/interpretation and restrooms) would be retained, improved, or added.

Agency: National Park Service

Project Name: **Wilderness Boundary Protection Land Exchange, Seventh Day Adventist Camp, Wawona**

Description: The Seventh Day Adventist recreational camp is located in Wawona on privately owned land inside the boundaries of Yosemite National Park. The privately owned land occupied by the camp nearly abuts portions of Yosemite's designated Wilderness. To protect designated Wilderness, this project would exchange lands between the National Park Service and the Seventh Day Adventist Camp. The proposed land exchange would consist of exchanging approximately 15 acres of land adjacent to the wilderness boundary owned by the Seventh Day Adventists with approximately 18 acres of National Park Service lands located immediately west of the Camp along Forest Road.

Agency: National Park Service

Project Name: **Wawona Campground Improvement**

Description: As specified by the Yosemite National Park 1980 *General Management Plan*, this project would rehabilitate the existing campground and construct an additional campground in Section 35.

Agency Name: U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management

Project Name: **South Fork and Merced Wild and Scenic River Implementation Plan**

Description: The U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management developed a joint South Fork and Merced Wild and Scenic River Implementation Plan in 1991 for the segments of the main stem and South Fork of the Merced River that are under the jurisdiction of these agencies. The segments include a 15- mile section of the main stem extending from the El Portal Administrative Site to a point 300 feet upstream of the confluence with Bear Creek, a 21- mile segment of the South Fork from the park boundary to the confluence of the Merced River, and a 3- mile segment of the South Fork just upstream of Wawona, where the National Park Service has jurisdiction over the north side of the river and the U.S. Forest Service has jurisdiction over the south side. The plan calls for the long- term protection of natural and cultural resources, and managing the area for the use and enjoyment of visitors in a way that will leave the resource unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as a natural setting.

Agency Name: National Park Service

Project Name: **Yosemite Valley Plan**

Description: The *Yosemite Valley Plan* provides modification and implementation of the *General Management Plan* of 1980 based on information collected and analyses conducted since 1980. The *Yosemite Valley Plan* is designed to restore, protect, and enhance the resources of Yosemite Valley; provide opportunities for high- quality, resources- based visitor experiences; reduce traffic congestion; and provide effective park operations, including employee housing, to meet the mission of the National Park Service.

Elements of the plan include restoration of 176 developed and disturbed acres of land in Yosemite Valley; redevelopment of 173 acres of developed land; development of 73 acres of undeveloped land; and various changes in park facilities, including consolidation of parking, additional campsites, reduction in lodging units, reduction in traffic, road closures and rerouting, and land restoration. The net effect of which will be to reduce development in Yosemite Valley by 71 acres.

Specifically, the plan calls for relocating 174 apartment, studio, or dormitory bed spaces from Yosemite Valley to Wawona, for those employees who work in Yosemite Valley. Additionally, 24 apartment, studio, or dormitory bed spaces would be provided to meet current housing shortages for employees who work in Wawona.

Trips into the east end of Yosemite Valley would be reduced for visitors in private vehicles; these trips would be replaced by a much smaller number of bus trips. This would be accomplished through limiting day- visitor parking in the valley and providing day- visitor parking outside Yosemite Valley. Although nothing specific is planned in Wawona, this could cause more people to visit the area and use the South Fork Bridge if they were unable to access Yosemite Valley.

Agency: Mariposa County

Project Name: Mariposa County General Plan Update

Description: The *Mariposa County General Plan* update process is ongoing. As of February 2003, a draft updated document was available for public comment. The plan provides general guidance for land use, zoning, and development throughout Mariposa County.

Agency: California State Department of Transportation; U.S. Department of Transportation, Mariposa County; Merced County Association of Governments; Mono County; National Park Service – Yosemite National Park; U.S. Forest Service – Sierra National and Inyo National Forest.

Project Name: Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS)

Description: YARTS is a collaborative, inter- agency effort begun in 1992 to evaluate the feasibility of a regional transportation system and to identify the best options for initial implementation and upkeep of such a system. YARTS is a Joint Powers Authority under California law, and the National Park Service is an ex- officio partner of the Joint Powers Authority Commission, participating in all discussions, but not voting as a member. The YARTS mission statement is as follows:

YARTS will provide a positive alternative choice for access to Yosemite National Park for visitors, employees, and residents. YARTS service is not intended to replace auto- access or trans- Sierra travel, but is intended to provide a viable alternative that offers a positive experience, maximizing comfort and convenience for riders while guaranteeing access into the park.

YARTS has four primary objectives:

- Increase transportation options
- Reduce reliance on automobiles
- Support local economies
- Improve regional air quality

A two- year demonstration service tested the YARTS concept from May 2000 to May 2002, with most service offered in the summer months.
